

O 191545Z SEP 98
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3293
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ5/ECPOLAD//
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//POLAD//
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
ODC ANKARA TU
TLO ANKARA TU
AMCONSUL ADANA

S E C R E T ANKARA 009055

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/09
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [SY](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: ARMY CHIEF WARNS SYRIA ABOUT SUPPORT FOR PKK

REF: (A) ANKARA 8898, (B) ANKARA 8522

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MARK R. PARRIS, EMBASSY
ANKARA. REASON: 1.5 (A), (B) AND (D).

¶1. (U) TURKISH LAND FORCES COMMAND (TLFC) COMMANDER
GENERAL ATILLA ATEŞ WAS QUOTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS SEPTEMBER
16 AS SAYING THAT TURKEY WAS "RUNNING OUT OF PATIENCE" WITH
SYRIA'S ALLEGED SUPPORT OF THE SEPARATIST/TERRORIST
KURDISTAN WORKERS PARTY (PKK). THE CONSERVATIVE "TÜRKİYE"
NEWSPAPER'S İHA NEWS AGENCY REPORTED ATEŞ AS ASSERTING THAT
BY "SUPPORTING THE 'BANDIT' APO (PKK LEADER ABDULLAH
OCALAN)," SYRIA HAD "CONTAMINATED TURKEY WITH THE CALAMITY
OF TERRORISM." HE WARNED THAT TURKEY "HAD NO MORE PATIENCE
LEFT."

¶2. (C) ATEŞ'S COMMENTS WERE ALL THE MORE POINTED BECAUSE
THEY WERE DELIVERED DURING A VISIT TO TROOPS IN HATAY
PROVINCE, SOVEREIGNTY OVER WHICH SYRIA CLAIMS AND WHICH IS
THEREFORE A MAJOR IRRITANT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ANKARA AND
DAMASCUS. ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL OF THE TURKISH GENERAL
STAFF (TGS), WHO SPOKE WITH EMBASSY CONTACTS SEPTEMBER 18, TGS'
SENIOR LEADERSHIP DECIDED THAT A PUBLIC WARNING TO SYRIA ABOUT
THE PKK WAS LONG OVERDUE. THE FACT THAT IT WAS DELIVERED BY ARMY
CHIEF ATEŞ IN HATAY UNDERScoreD THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MESSAGE
BEHIND IT.

¶3. (C) IN THREE SEPARATE CONTACTS SEPTEMBER 17, MFA U/S
HAKTANIR AND TWO OTHER SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS LIKEWISE
REITERATED THAT TURKEY IS "OUT OF PATIENCE" WITH SYRIA, AND
THAT THE DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES OF EARLIER THIS YEAR HAD "COME
TO A STOP."

¶4. (S) COMMENT: IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE TURKS ARE LAYING
OUT A GROUNDWORK OF DIPLOMATIC AND PUBLIC WARNINGS TO DAMASCUS TO
PROVIDE A RATIONALE FOR AN EVENTUAL DECISION ON A MILITARY
RESPONSE TO PKK ACTIVITY IN SYRIA. SOME OF THE LANGUAGE THEY
HAVE USED RECALLS OUR POST FACTO JUSTIFICATION OF OUR CRUISE
MISSILE ATTACKS ON OSAMA BIN LADEN FACILITIES LAST MONTH. WE
HAVE NO INDICATION A DECISION TO ACTUALLY CARRY OUT AN ATTACK HAS
BEEN REACHED. WE RECOMMEND U.S. INTELLIGENCE ATTENTION TO
INDICATIONS OF TURKISH MILITARY AND PKK ACTIVITY IN THE
SYRIAN-TURKISH BORDER REGION, AS WELL AS THE BEKAA.

PARRIS